

Message Text

SECRET

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60/65

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8800

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

S E C R E T PARIS 07561

EXDIS

(C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - P A R A 1 L I N E 6)

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, AG, CU, LY, UR, FR

SUBJECT: REPORTED ARRIVAL OF CUBANS AND ARMS IN
ALGERIA

1. IN MEETING MARCH 12 WITH AMBASSADOR ROBERT NEUMANN
AND EMBOFF, QUAI DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICA AND LEVANT,
PIERRE CERLESBN SAID THE FRENCH HAVE HEARD FROM AN
EXCELLENT SOURCE THAT A TRICKLE OF CUBANS IS ARRIVING
IN ALGERIA. HE SAID THEY COME IN SMALL GROUPS OF 2,
3, OR 4, BY REGULAR PLANE FLIGHTS, AND THAT THEIR
PRESENCE IS KNOWN BECAUSE THEY TRANSIT "FRIENDLY
COUNTRIES". CERLES DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE CUBANS
COME DIRECTLY FROM CUBA OR FROM ANGOLA OR SOME OTHER
PLACE IN AFRICA. HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GIVE US MORE
DETAILS, INCLUDING NUMBERS AND THE CUBANS' DESTINATION
IN ALGERIA, NEXT WEEK. TERMING THE INFORMATION "HIGHLY
SIGNIFICANT", CERLES SPECULATED THAT THE CUBANS MIGHT

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BE IN ALGERIA TO MAINTAIN SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND

TO MAN MISSILE LAUNCHERS WITHIN THE COUNTRY, BUT DOUBTED THAT THEY WOULD BE USED OUTSIDE ALGERIA OR ON THE FRONT LINES IF FIGHTING BREAKS OUT.

2. CERLES ALSO SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAVE HAD RECENT CONFIRMATION OF ARMS SHIPMENTS FROM LIBYA TO SOUTHERN ALGERIA. HE SAID THE DELIVERIES, WHICH STOPPED AT THE END OF FEBRUARY, INCLUDED 60 TO 100 T-54 AND T-62 TANKS, 100 TO 150 MISCELLANEOUS VEHICLES AND 10,000 TONS OF AMMUNITION, ENOUGH MATERIAL TO EQUIP AN ARMORED BRIGADE. THE FRENCH DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SUPPLIES WERE FROM LIBYAN STOCKS OR MERELY TRANSITED LIBYA ON THEIR WAY FROM THE USSR.

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